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UNITED STATES INTELLIGENCE BOARD

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

28 March 1966

MEMORANDUM FOR MR. HELMS

SUBJECT : Scope of the USIB Minutes

1. At your suggestion following our discussion last Thursday, this memorandum submits a recommendation on the subject for approval in paragraph 6.

2. In response to your questions regarding existing concepts as to the length and scope of USIB minutes, my understanding has been that the record of the Board's discussion of COMOR-related items should be comprehensive and full. This concept stems from Mr. McCone's desires that, after the Cuban experience and post-mortem and in the light of operational difficulties with some reconnaissance systems, all the factors and positions expressed during Board deliberations on COMOR items should be recorded for information and future reference, as well as an accurate statement of the actions and decisions taken. In the absence of other instructions or requests for change, the Secretariat has continued to prepare such long and detailed drafts, similar to that shown in Tab A.

3. On the other hand, the drafts on other types of USIB items recorded in the regular **SECRET** minutes or the code-word Special Annexes have been prepared generally in summary form. Frequently, only the Board's decisions or actions are recorded, especially when there is a basic reference document being considered such as the Watch Report, an NIE or a USIB Committee report. Where the discussion focuses on particular factors or issues which would be useful for record or reference purposes, a tabulation of these points is often included but normally without identifying the

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varying opinions or positions expressed by individual USIB Principals. When required or requested in particular cases, views of the principals on major issues may be specifically recorded, especially when there are dissents involved in the Board's final decisions. An example of a minute item applying these concepts is attached at Tab B.

4. The long and short forms of minutes described above both have advantages and disadvantages along the lines discussed below. However, there does not appear to be any real "middle ground" between them because, once the views of some principals are recorded, it is considered only fair and proper that all other views expressed also be reported.

a. The long form unquestionably provides a complete record for history and future reference, and for detailed guidance to those who must follow up on the Board's decision, especially in preparing further reports. It also reports how the special interests and responsibilities of the member departments and agencies were taken into account. On the other hand, if the participants know that their comments are to be reproduced and circulated there is a natural tendency to "talk for the record", thereby inhibiting a free and frank exchange of views in assessing all feasible alternatives. Moreover, the circulation of these long minutes even on a limited distribution furnishes to many who were not in attendance detailed knowledge of the Board's deliberations which may or may not be helpful or needed in their work. In fact, to the extent that views expressed during the discussion contrary to the finally-agreed decisions are circulated, doubt may be raised in the minds of the recipients who were not at the meeting as to the soundness of or degree of support for the decisions reached.

b. The short form does not give a full background of the Board's decisions for future reference or guidance, nor does it indicate the extent to which various viewpoints were expressed and debated. On the other hand, a short form identifying the basic issues and the factors considered and

discussed, concluding with a precise statement of the Board's decisions and actions, can provide an effective and clear-cut instruction and guidance for appropriate action by all concerned. Since positions taken by each participant would not be recorded except as required or requested, the short form could stimulate a more thorough and objective exploration of all feasible options even though some might not represent any particular agency position.

5. On balance, it is believed that the short summary form of minutes, used in a flexible manner as required by the particular item being considered, encourages free and frank deliberations which should lead to clear and effective Board decisions and actions regarding the critical problems facing the intelligence community.

6. Accordingly, it is recommended that, if you concur, this memorandum be submitted to the DCI as Chairman, USIB, with the recommendation that the USIB Secretariat be authorized to prepare the draft USIB minutes on COMOR-related as well as all other agenda items by flexible use of the short summary form described above, unless a particular item is deemed to require a full record of the Board's deliberations.


Executive Secretary

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Attachments

CONCUR:

/s/ Richard Helms

30 MAR 1966

Richard Helms
Deputy Director of Central Intelligence

Date

APPROVE:

(signed) W. F. Raborn

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